

Claims

1. A method of supporting at least two types of message service in a mobile communications system, wherein the at least two types of message service are transported by a SIP message, a control portion of each SIP message including an identification of the type of message service.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein a transmitted message is processed in dependence on the identification in the control portion.
3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the control portion is a header of the SIP message.
4. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the control portion is a value field of the SIP message.
5. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein all messages are processed by an application associated with the second message type.
6. A method according to claim 5 wherein for messages of the first type, the application associated with the second message type forwards the message to an application associated with messages of the second type.
7. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the at least two types of messaging service include a first type of messaging service dependent upon reliable delivery and a second type of messaging service dependent upon instant delivery.
8. A method according to claim 7 wherein the first type of messaging service is one of a: short message service; an extended message service; or a multimedia message service.

9. A method according to claim 7 or claim 8 wherein the second type of message service is an instant messaging service.

10. A mobile communications system in which at least a first and second type of message service are supported, wherein the system includes first and second application servers associated with the at least the first and second message service types, wherein the first and second types of message service are transported by an SIP message to the first application server, each SIP message including a control portion identifying the type of message, wherein the first application server is adapted to direct messages of the second type to the second application server.

11. A mobile communication system according to claim 10, wherein the control portion of the SIP message is a header field.

12. A mobile communication system according to claim 10, wherein the control portion of the SIP message is a value field.

13. A mobile communication system according to any one of claims 10 to 12, wherein the first type of message service is dependent upon the instant delivery of a message.

14. A mobile communication system according to any one of claims 10 to 13, wherein the first type of message service is an instant messaging service.

15. A mobile communication system according to claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the first application server is an Internet multimedia subsystem application server.

16. A mobile communication server according to any one of claims 10 to 15 wherein the second type of messaging service is dependent upon reliable delivery of a message.

17. A mobile communication system according to any one
5 of claims 10 to 16 wherein the second type of message service is one of either: a short message service; an extended message service; or a multimedia message service.

18. A mobile communication system according to any one
10 of claims 10 to 17 wherein the second application server is a multimedia message server application server.

19. A mobile communication system according to any one
15 of claims 15 to 18, wherein the Internet multimedia subsystem application server is adapted to store and forward SIP messages in dependence on the control portion identifying the message type.

20. An application server of a mobile communications
20 system in which at least a first and second type of message service are supported and in which the application server is associated with the first of said message types, wherein the first and second types of message service are transported by an SIP message to the application server, each SIP message including a control portion identifying the type of message, and wherein the application server is adapted to direct messages of the second type to a further
25 application server.

21. An application server according to claim 20 consisting of an Internet multimedia subsystem application server.

22. An application server according to claim 20 or
30 claim 21, wherein the further server is a multimedia messaging service applications server.